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Canada Articles

COLLECTORS

Wayne Eastcott, *For S.H.1*, silkscreen, digital, and stenciled enamel on aluminum and paper, 34" x 44".

9 ARTISTS TO CONSIDER RIGHT NOW

BY Richard White

WAYNE EASTCOTT**Born:** Trail, BC**Studied:** Vancouver School of Art 1966**Lives/Works:** Vancouver**Price Range:** \$450 - \$5000

Staff at **The Bellevue Gallery** in West Vancouver enjoy working with collectors. "Each one is on an individual journey based on their personal tastes in art, their knowledge, experience and creative instincts. I love watching people fall in love with art in general and a particular artist. It can happen

at any age." says executive director, Lynn Ray. "I remember one patron who came in looking for something specific, fell in love with the work of another artist and changed direction completely."

For new collectors, she observes that art by established printmakers working in small editions can be an affordable way to start. For example, Wayne Eastcott and Michiko Suzuki have work available for less than \$500. They've also done a collaborative exhibition, *Interconnection*, which weaves their creative processes together.

Eastcott's innovative printmaking led to new techniques based on drawing and photographic imagery with a strong technological basis, often reworked with gestural effects. Producing mostly silkscreen prints, with a variety of inks (often handmade), he prints on paper and aluminum to create visually rich collages of man-made and natural images.

Collector Tip

Research is an enjoyable aspect of art collecting. Attend "meet the artist" receptions; read reviews in newspapers and magazines to see what critics say about the artist or the genre that interests you.



Sheila Kernan, *Catching Dreams*, mixed media on canvas, 36" x 48".

SHEILA KERNAN**Born:** Saskatoon, 1982**Studied:** BFA, Alberta College of Art and Design, 2007**Lives/Works:** Calgary**Price Range:** \$1,000 - \$5,000

Mary and Jeremy Weimer at **Assiniboia Gallery** in Regina have embraced social media as a way of communicating with potential collectors and making sales.

For example, in the gallery's last solo show featuring Sheila Kernan, they sold one of her paintings over Twitter to a first-time art buyer. He

had been following the gallery on Twitter and was intrigued by the information circulated in the days leading up to the show. So he emailed the artist directly (by googling Kernan) to ask specific questions. He ultimately came to the show, met the artist and bought a painting. "It's all about making things easy, transparent and fun for the buyer," says Mary Weimer.

After four years of painting professionally, Kernan is on the fast track, currently represented in several Western Canadian commercial galleries. Her work is often described as intense, electric and buzzing, as the bold primary colours she uses have the impact of neon lighting. She often paints urban streetscapes, and seems fascinated with how cities come to life at night, a theme ideally suited to her palette and process.

Collector Tip

Use the internet, Facebook and Twitter to search out new artists. Don't be afraid to email or text the artist or the gallery with questions, to find out about new work and upcoming exhibitions. Enjoy the thrill of the hunt – however, you choose to hunt!



Scott Pattinson, *Pacific #58*, acrylic on canvas, 12" x 12".

seems collectors are looking for edgier, more innovative art."

An artist she would recommend for someone starting a collection is Scott Pattinson. He is a young but established artist based in Guelph, Ontario, who first studied architecture, but is now a full-time artist and has received significant media and collector attention. His colourful abstracts combine architectural elements with various motifs and symbols. Bugera noted he's represented in several galleries which is important for collecting as it means several gallery owners recognize his talent.

Collector Tip

Bugera recommends that first-time collectors look around the galleries, develop your own taste and listen to the dealers talk about the artists. But in the end buy what you love rather than what someone may say is an investment, because art as an investment is always a gamble.



SCOTT PATTINSON

Born: Toronto, 1974

Studied: University of Toronto, 2003

Lives/Works: Guelph, ON

Price Range: \$500+

Asked how art collecting has evolved during her time as a gallery owner in Edmonton, **Agnes Bugera** was quick to note: "There is a new generation of art buyers who are more adventurous. They are not afraid of collecting something different in texture and content. Ten or 15 years ago, people looked for representational art depicting canola fields or landscapes — things they could relate too. Before that it was old grain elevators and barns which were falling apart. I think people bought more sentimentally. Today it

ANNABELLE MARQUIS

Born: Montreal, 1979

Studied: Fine Arts, C.E.G.E.P. St-Laurent (College)/ Graphic arts, C.E.G.E.P. Ahuntsic

Lives/Works: Montreal

Price Range: \$1,000 - \$3,000

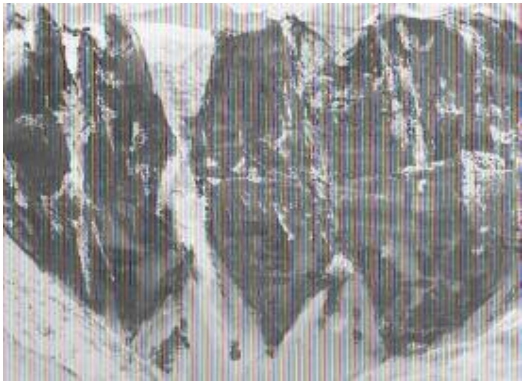
Co-owners Dan and Lana Hudon at Edmonton and Victoria's **West End Gallery** stress two things to collectors — quality and personal visual satisfaction. "You have to like — no, love — the

work if you're going to live with it for long time," says Dan. One of their recent finds is Annabelle Marquis an emerging artist who has captured the interest of several patrons, including experienced collectors. In fact she recently acquired representation in New York.

Marquis devoted six years to graphic arts and illustration before the desire for more artistic freedom prompted her to pursue her own creativity. Her first solo exhibition in 2006 was a success and she has continued to pursue her artistic vision with a passion. Marquis combines her vibrant youth with her artistic maturity in an approach to painting that is deeply tied to colour and composition. Working with both representational and abstract images, her mixed media, collage-inspired canvases strike a graceful balance between fragmentation and beauty. Blending rugged edges and torn paper motifs with painterly brushwork, she has created a dynamic interaction of electric colour, with abstract and real forms, and various textures.

Collector Tip

Learn to trust your own tastes and don't get caught up in hype and trends. Good art endures. If you're moving or redecorating, consider reframing or rearranging your art. Educate yourself with the guidance of a qualified art dealer.



Peter Ivens, Saturate, acrylic on canvas, 29" x 40".

PETER IVENS

Born: Calgary, 1955

Studied: BFA University of Alberta, 1987

Lives/Works: Calgary

Price Range: \$600 - \$7,000

Anna Ostberg at **Ruberto Ostberg Gallery** in Calgary loves working with both new and experienced collectors. For some of her clients, it's almost an addiction. "I love telling people who buy a work of art that they are now collectors. They're shocked to hear this. They think of collectors as larger than life, important, rich people who purchase millions in artwork. Not them!" she says.

Ostberg hesitantly says "It's tough to pick one artist to recommend to collectors. It really depends on their tastes. Peter Ivens is someone who would be good to look at." He's collected nationally and internationally (Disney, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Esso, Suncor and Marriot Hotels) and yet is affordable. "I love the way he paints with a sense of freedom and expressiveness taking traditional landscapes and transforming them into something fresh and unexpected. He's a master of material, medium, colour and light. People often marvel at his execution and combination of colours" Ostberg says.

Collector Tip

The biggest hurdle for many first time collectors is getting past the price of art. But remember it's one of the few purchases you'll make that will hold or increase in value over time. Amortize the cost over 20 or 25 years, and factor in the dividends of pleasure it will pay you every time you look at it, and buying art is a bargain.



RENATO MUCCILLO

Born: Vancouver 1965

Studied: Largely self-taught. Studied briefly under Harold Powell

Lives/Works: Vancouver

Price Range: \$800 - \$15,250

Visitors to **White Rock Gallery** sometimes refer to it as their 'oasis of calm' in this increasingly



Renato Muccillo, *Neaves Road Canal*, oil, 24" x 24".

Renato Muccillo, creates just that kind of work. His largely rural landscapes are subtle studies of light and atmosphere imbued with colour. They've been described as having a 'preternatural stillness'. "It's a paradox," explains Dennie, "because this quality stems from a professional approach that is inherently, restlessly, dynamic. In fact, his mind brims with curiosity and he revels in treating each day as an opportunity to discover new ground." She thinks it's this cast of mind that, together with his intimate knowledge of his subject, fuses the bond with the individual.

Muccillo's work ranges from the diminutive 4 x 4 inches to the more typical 24 x 24 or 36 x 36, with a few pieces as large as 60 x 60, meaning that his art is available across a wide spectrum of prices.

Collector Tip

Don't hesitate to visit galleries often — they're free. It's one of life's great pleasures. And if you see something you like, ask the staff whether you can try the painting at home before you commit. Layaway possibilities are also worth asking about.



Blu Smith, *Eagle Perch*, mixed media, 54" x 96".

BLU SMITH

Born: British Columbia, 1968

Studied: BFA University of Victoria

Lives/Works: Victoria

Price Range: \$1800+,br>

In a recent conversation, Heather Wheeler at Victoria's **Avenue Gallery** picked up on a trend of collectors becoming more interested in historical Canadian painters, other than the Group of Seven.

"Collectors are becoming more eclectic, combining

contemporary and historical works in their collections" she said. She is also noticing that collectors are becoming more interested in abstract art.

Blu Smith is a relative newcomer to the Victoria gallery scene. "I've been watching Blu's work over the last couple of years. The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria's installation at Victoria International Airport featuring one of his paintings, *Eagle's Perch*, drew me in immediately. This was the first I had seen his work in person and I was very impressed by his powerful and masterful application of paint as well as the subtle textures — his technique was confident and mature," Wheeler says. "When deciding who will be a 'fit' in the gallery, there's a question of balance in my existing stable of artists — Blu's clear abstracts filled a niche we had been looking to expand. The response from clients and fellow artists has been enthusiastic."

Collector Tip

Most reputable galleries offer a trial period, where you can take a work home for a period of a week, maybe two to see how the work fits into your space. If you're interested in a piece, don't be afraid to ask the gallery if you can take it home on a trial basis.



CINDY DYSON

Born: Winnipeg, 1968

Studied: BFA, University of Manitoba School of Art, 2009

Lives/Works: Winnipeg

Price Range: \$500 - \$2,500



Cindy Dyson, *Growth*, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 46".

At **Birchwood Art Galleries** in Winnipeg, co-directors Lyn Chercoe and Carole Solmundson note that younger patrons are tending less toward limited edition prints and more to photography. As well, they note some gallery visitors seem more concerned with decorating than collecting.

The gallery has seen strong interest in the work of Cindy Dyson, a recent addition to their stable of artists. Lyn and Carole love her brilliant use of the palette knife — something not often seen in contemporary painting. She paints everyday events and places, with titles like: *Coffee Break, Parking Lot and Hair Shop*.

Dyson fell in love with the sheer physicality of the palette knife in a painting class taught by Bill Pura at the University of Manitoba. "I love that even though it can be an aggressive tool, with control it can produce lovely intricate detail. The marks the knife can make — large swooping blends of paint, tiny soft dabs, scrapes, sprays, and blobs — intrigue me," she says. "I'm always looking for new ways to utilize the knife. I love to experiment."

Collector Tip

Don't be concerned about too much art. It's fun to take down pieces and replace them with something else, then bring them out and hang them in a different location to see them in a different light or context. Go ahead and play curator with your collection.



Harold Lyon, *The Great Escape*, oil on canvas, 36" x 48".

HAROLD LYON

Born: Ontario, 1930

Studied: Meinszinger School of Art, Detroit;
Ontario College of Art, Toronto

Lives/Works: Arizona

Price Range: \$650 - \$25,000

Co-owners Marie and Robert Wood at **Gainsborough Galleries** manage one of Western Canada's oldest commercial galleries. Located in downtown Calgary, they represent a wide variety of painters and sculptors and see collectors of all ages and interests. Recently they've noticed a desire for more colourful and

dramatic paintings, and also a change in framing preferences. More clients are displaying paintings either unframed, or in various liner-less styles of frames.

One of their most collectible artists is Harold Lyon. "He just turned 80, has had a productive 50-year career and is still producing fantastic work," Robert says. "He was recently the subject of a major article in *Arabella* magazine, and his art has been acquired by the Booth Western Art Museum in Cartersville, GA and the Desert Caballeros Western Museum in Wickenburg, AZ for their permanent collections. He's at a stage in his career where his values will be on the rise again. Known as a traditional Western artist, he also paints a wide variety of landscapes, old buildings, portraits and even florals. His work appeals to a diversity of collectors."

Collector Tip

Purchase pieces of the best quality possible. Not all works by a given artist are equal; developing an eye for quality is critical to building a strong collection. Better to buy a well-executed smaller piece, than a less well-executed large piece. Taking courses to learn more about art techniques can be useful.

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