

## INTERIORS

For art enthusiasts, artwork is as much a part of their home as the furniture. And when it comes to ultra-high-net-worth homebuyers and owners, the range of art and how it is displayed takes on another dimension.

Knight Frank's Wealth Report, published this week, shows that art is the top-performing luxury asset class of 2017. Katie Trueman, a co-founder of Highline Art Partners, an art curator, says: "From the most affluent collectors, we are seeing demand for the highest-quality works by the biggest names, ranging from the old masters and impressionists all the way through to contemporary art. Impressionist and modern art is particularly increasing in demand, with the leaders of this field — Picasso, Monet, Signac and Magritte — being the most desired."

Some of the most decadent art displays in London can be found at One Hyde Park, the super-prime development by the Candy brothers' CPC Group, where flats sell for £75 million. It is a haven for plutocrats, many of whom take a keen interest in art. The interior designer and founder of Elicyon, Charu Gandhi, has designed 14 of the 85 apartments. "Our clients want to make sure the artwork is not an afterthought. They want it to be considered early on in the project. Right from the start we have to think about where we place key pieces."

For example, a four-bedroom apartment at One Hyde Park, recently completed by Elicyon, has two white sculptures by Helaine Blumenfeld to greet you at the entrance; as you look down the corridor to the reception room you see a cast-iron Antony Gormley sculpture on a lit alabaster plinth; pieces by Joan Miró and Serge Poliakoff also feature. A Damien Hirst and a Roy Lichtenstein adorn the kitchen walls. Stroll over to the snug, or television room, and you'll be struck by the Andy Warhol series above the sofa. Among the bedroom highlights are pieces by Banksy and David Hockney.

Gandhi says her clients' budgets can reach millions of pounds for artwork. "Often we ask galleries to lend us the pieces, even for a day, and try to have a session on site where the client can see them in situ. The alternative is that we use 3D modelling and show the options to the client that way."

An increasing number of interior designers are working closely with art



A Jessica Zoob canvas (London Connoisseur) in the Taylor Howes office in Cheval Place, Knightsbridge, London

## Homes that are a blank canvas for art

Is that a Warhol? Yes, it comes with the house. **Anna Temkin** looks at how paintings are taking centre stage in developments

advisers and galleries, not only to "test" pieces for private clients, but also to rent them for show apartments. "The idea is that a buyer comes to see the apartment, likes it and wants to buy the artwork with it," Gandhi says.

Designers commissioned by developers often like to work with artists

who are local to the scheme. Sam McNally, a design director and co-founder of Echlin, a design studio says: "We've recently been working with a gallery that supports established and emerging artists based in South Kensington called Cadogan Contemporary. For

this service we pay a rental fee, which helps the artists, and the works can be sold with the house."

**Lighting is everything**

Directional spotlights, well-lit plinths and in-wall picture-hanging systems are



One of the apartments at One Hyde Park, designed by Elicyon, features Andy Warhol's Cow Series, among work by other artists. **Left: Geode Bunch framed graphic art by Marmont Hill, £141.99, wayfair.co.uk**

among the techniques used by designers to put their clients' collections in the best light. "When it comes to displaying pieces, it is always about the control of light," says James White, co-founder of March & White, the international architecture and interior design house. "There have been times when we have had to bring in automated retractable blinds to follow the sun, so that some pieces don't get too much light exposure."

Trueman says: "Collecting different mediums [digital art, sculpture,



A two-bedroom flat in Mayfair, London, has replica prints of Michelangelo's Creation of Adam. The flat is on sale for £3.9 million through Knight Frank

paintings and photography] can help when considering where to place pieces. For example, sculptural and digital works can be placed in rooms with strong natural light, which would pose conservation risks to paintings."

**How to hang it: tips from the experts**

Karen Howes of the luxury interior design practice Taylor Howes says: "When it comes to positioning artwork, always take into consideration key vistas; it is good to have the eye lead to something dramatic, for example at the end of a hallway, or a statement piece above a fireplace. If it is a painting, a general rule of thumb is to assess the eye level of the viewer and hang the art accordingly, but one also needs to take into account the scale [of a piece] against the ceiling height."

Nadia McCowan Hill, style adviser for Wayfair, the home furnishing website, says: "Larger art pieces are often more expensive, but you can still achieve a super-luxe, yet affordable, look by creating a gallery wall with a selection of smaller prints. To give your arrangement a premium feel, try to find a common thread, either via colour or subject."

Framing is as important as the art. "It can make or break a piece," says Suzy Hoodless, the interior designer who worked on the conversion of the old BBC Television Centre in White City, west London.

For homes with a central staircase, having many pictures grouped together on the wall beside it works well, White says. "It's called a 'heavy hang'. If it is a listed building, you could have frames that are more traditional and gilded." If your budget can stretch to it, you may want to consider commissioning a bespoke piece, says Rebecca Hughes, a London-based luxury interior designer.

● **The Affordable Art Fair in Battersea Park, south London, runs to March 11**