

# Art & Culture

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## Start your collection

With the island's first ever ArtBahrain fair in town this month, we ask *Marion Labani* of local art consultancy Artdivano for tips on how young collectors should approach new investments



Choose your first art piece wisely

### Try reproductions

For those who would like to start collecting art, a certified limited edition of a fine art reproduction is a current 'must have' in the art world, following a trend for lower price tags which was clearly seen at Art Dubai in spring this year.

### Find your passion

A first-time buyer in pursuit of starting his or her art collection should be aware of looking for what they love, especially when it comes to having the factor of investment in their mind.

### Decide your budget

The art of collecting art is all but priceless, therefore a reasonable budget should be available to spend over a certain time range in order to kick start the collection.

### Know your market

Explore, browse online, visit shows, exhibitions and art fairs, and take your time to ensure your approach by discovering what kind of art appeals to you and what artists are significant to you.

It is always an option to start your collection by buying from an online

gallery instead of being intimidated by a gallery visit where prices are often on request only, and your jaw may drop after speaking to a gallery assistant about costs.

### Ask the experts

Engage with a professional art consultant to widen your view and horizon on local and regional aspects and artists. Once you know what you are interested in buying, you can start your collection with a regional artist and expand step-by-step by taking different angles on art, such as establishing a themed collection which may support emerging artists in the region you live or travel.

### Diversify the mediums

Enrich your lifestyle with artworks such as original paintings, sculptures, lithographs, and fine art photography or, if you're on a budget, even start with a selection of limited edition, fine art reproductions by one of your favourite artists.

*Marion Labani is co-founder of Artdivano, a local online gallery, art consultancy and archival print studio which is participating in ArtBahrain at stand 32 from October 13-16. Reem Centre, Riffa, marion@artdivano.com (3921 2060).*

### What the experts say...

'I think it's key that one knows why they are buying in the first place. Is it for investment purposes, to start a collection with the purpose of lending or showing one day, or simply for personal reasons? If it is for the latter I suggest buyers always purchase something they actually love and cherish. If they continue to do this their collection will have a voice of their own as a reflection of their tastes and likes.'

'They must always be aware of quality and provenance – which points to an artwork's authenticity and previous owners – as well if they are serious.'

'The artist should have an extensive showing history if they are hoping the work will accrue value in the future, or simply like the artist's concepts, themes, their series or depiction of subject matter.'

'For me, it is important the artwork has a strong reason for existing beyond an aesthetic mood, such as being "pretty", as I believe art has a stronger historical significance if it reflects the spirit of the time and culture it was created in.'

**- Frances Stafford, art consultant**

'Examine the market but do not be afraid of asking for assistance. The art world can sometimes be a confusing and highly pressurised space. A gallerist or an art advisory service, like the one we offer through our gallery, will be able to interpret and guide the novice art buyer towards the works that will best suit his or her needs.'

**- Elena Shchukina, owner of London-based Gallery Elena Shchukina**

'If you are starting an art collection, you have to have a continual theme in order for the collection to have a perspective. The collection needs to be transparent and carry a key message.'

**- Kaneka Subberwal, co-founder of ArtBahrain and Art Select**

### Your first buy?

Artdivano's in-house archival print studio has commissioned a limited edition series by one of Bahrain's leading calligraphers, Abbas Yousif, who has prized works among the 'Words into Art' collection at the British Museum. The Artdivano fine art reproductions – which have a lower price tag in comparison to the originals – is named 'Beloved Poetry, Lyrics and Fairytales' and is inspired by poets, writers and singers of the Arab World. This offers a more affordable way to kick start your collection.

