

SPEAKER PROGRAM

The following is a transcript of the presentation given by Patti L Cowger, PLC Interiors, "Building an Art Collection", 9/4/11.

ARTISTS FEATURED IN TRANSCRIPT: (*)

SUE AVERELL, FOUNDER OF ARTISTS @ WORK
CYNTHIA DUNCAN
DANI ROACH
SHERRY MILLER
DEBORAH BERTOLLA
GAIL STERLING3
ELLEN DODD
CAROL JACOBSEN
FRANCES GALLI

(*) Other ICB artists featured in accompanying presentation.

"Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here.

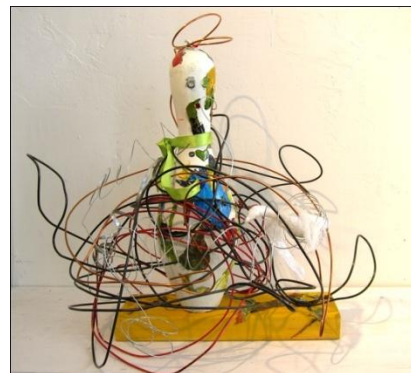
Today I will be showing you 5 examples of residential and commercial collections, 2 based on my own interior design projects. I am also going to weave in the differences between these 2 types of collections and the difference between ART and DESIGN.

Loosely speaking, COMMERCIAL clients send a message through their art to their company and the public associated with the company. RESIDENTIAL clients tell a personal story about themselves to their family and friends.

While art and design have much in common, DESIGN is something best viewed from a distance, as a body of work. ART is something that draws you IN.....and stands on its own.

EXAMPLE 1:

I'd like to start with these oil paintings by [Cynthia Duncan](#) and this 3-dimensional figure by [Dani Roach](#).



These pieces would work in a company who is in the business of being creative and inventive such as a marketing agency or a high-tech firm. These images are PROVOCATIVE and INSPIRE SOLUTIONS..... and I know from personal experience that art really CAN solve problems. Although 40 years ago, I can still remember being a math major in college, trying to prove a theorem. I found myself staring into a poster of painting, and when I noticed how gravity affected the application of paint, I knew how to prove the theorem!

The image in the poster DREW ME IN and put me in a CREATIVE, PROBLEM-SOLVING ZONE.

Because of the perimeter of white space both of Cynthia's paintings, her images become SINGLE-FOCUSED which DRAW the viewer into that same ZONE as my poster.

The same can be said for Dani's piece. It's intriguing and MESMORIZING, and also draws you in. Your mind becomes limitless as you wonder where it starts, where it ends, and WHAT it is!

As a body of work, I would mount these paintings individually with a lot of empty space around each one. I would also single out Dani's piece and let it stand on its own. This serves 2 purposes. It reinforces the single-focused quality that draws the viewer in, and when not drawn in, the empty space gives the eye a rest and time for the imagination to regenerate.

Abstracts without this white space may not offer relief. There is a risk that such art could become aggressive or disturbing - which may be its intention and better suited in a different venue – but not the message the client in this example wants to send. Instead, the 3 that I have chosen not only send the message “Free your imagination”, the collection adds BEAUTY. And a beautiful collection feeds the soul of stressed employees on a deadline!

EXAMPLE 2:

Next I'd like to take you to a hotel in Tahiti where this acrylic by [Sue Averell](#) would make a magnificent first impression as you walk into the lobby.



Imagine this piece to be on a much larger format which Sue often uses. As a designer, this is very easy. I'd create a vignette that does not dilute the importance of the painting, but in fact, draws one's attention to it. The space planning would be arranged in a way to FRAME the painting.

For other common/public areas of the hotel, I've chosen oil paintings by [Deborah Bertolla](#) (below left) and [Sherry Miller's](#) (below middle).

Because of the difference of color value and intensity, I would separate [Gail Sterling's](#) oil (below right) from Deborah's and Sherry's oils and place it in a bedroom suite.



While each of these 4 paintings could be used individually in DIFFERENT types of collections and have DIFFERENT meanings, together....AS A BODY OF WORK.....they send a strong message, which is, “This is Tahiti, these are our colors, this is our scenery, this is our mood. REMEMBER this when you go home. “

EXAMPLE 3:

A private office in a commercial space is much like a residence. I really like these projects because I am asking clients to choose 1 or 2 personal things to share with colleagues, employees, patients, clients, etc. - whoever comes into their office.

My (real) client, Bev, had a very stressful position in a corporation and wanted to make her office exceptionally comfortable. She loved pastel colors during the age of earth tones, and to find fabrics in those colors at that time was virtually impossible. Luckily, we could stop looking for fabrics in those colors once we discovered [Ellen Dodd](#). In reality, Bev has a few of Ellen's landscape paintings which satisfy her pastel cravings. But for today's example, I am substituting them for Ellen's multi-mixed media blocks that have the same colors.



I also designed a fountain for Bev's backyard using 200-year-old reclaimed tile from Tunisia. I knew she would appreciate its history and I knew she would love its blue color. But I didn't know that she had spent part of her childhood in TURKEY. So what I could have added to Bev's office is [Sherry Miller's](#) oil painting (below right) because of its Byzantine influenceand its blue color.



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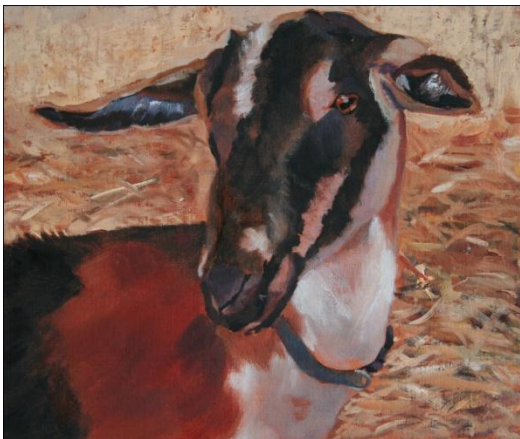


At this point I'd like to say something about color. Bev and I have teased each other for years because we like such different colors – she, pastels and I, my Leo oranges and reds. So this summer as I was redesigning my website, I emailed her to say that I had changed it from orange to dusty lavender, a color most unusual for me. But as my eyes became increasingly strained from designing my website, I found dusty lavender to be very soothing. Bev laughed and said that since retiring, she now loves oranges and reds!

Needless to say, COLOR can play a large part in the art that we are attracted to. And, at different times of our lives, we may be drawn to different colors. A good example of this is Picasso's Blue Period.

EXAMPLE 4:

Working with residential clients is more personal in some ways, especially when it comes to their art. As they build their collection, they are really writing a book..... an AUTOBIOGRAPHY. Their collection reflects different phases of their lives, different experiences, different travels. For art they have already chosen, my job is to ORGANIZE the chapters of their book and feature them in the best way.

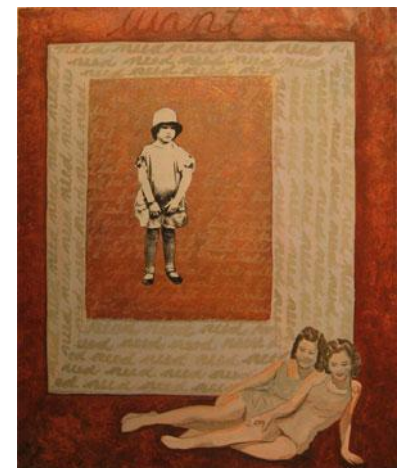


My client, Dee, here in Sausalito, now lives alone, her kids are grown, and her townhouse is not conducive to having pets. So when she greeted me at the door a few months ago, excited to say that she had a pet, I was thinkinggold fish. But when I turned the corner, I saw the adorable face of one of [Deborah Bertola's](#) Barbary sheep – similar to Deborah's tri-color goat (left).

Would my client have chosen this piece in a different chapter of her life, when she was busy raising her family? I don't know. But I know that she is NOW so enchanted with this sheep that she gave her a name and is driving to west Marin to meet her in person...the sheep, not Deborah.

While artists are aware of how they express themselves through their medium, they may not be entirely aware of HOW MUCH JOY they GIVE through it.

Dee's piece has a red background, which, as a bonus, is the same bluey-red of the swivel chairs we put in that same room. Had the background been a different color, it would NOT have been wrong (art stands on its own). But now, in this case, the color red, itself, was developing into its own design element in the room and something we can build on.



I'm illustrating this concept with [Carol Jacobsen's](#) acrylic (right). One design strategy is to dedicate a single wall with art containing all the same colors, in the same value. The wall then becomes a sculpture in the room, and adds its own VOLUME to the room.

As an aside, Dee's sheep is above her fireplace and overlooks the Bay. My DESIGN tip of the day: if you have a room with multiple focal points like Dee's windows and fireplace, as many of you in the Bay Area do, swivel chairs are a great way to enjoy all views.

EXAMPLE 5:



Lastly, as I was preparing for this presentation and going through all the works submitted by the ICB artists, I wondered how I would ever narrow it down. But when I came across "Dreaming of Italy" by Frances Galli, I felt a BIG tug at my heart. It brought me back to my Italian roots. This could be my grandmother, my mother, my cousin relaxing on a chair in our Tuscan hill town.

As I continued to work on my presentation, I kept going BACK to this painting, not because I was trying to fit it into these other collections, but because it gave me comfort and eventually, it made me cry. And after doing this for a couple of days, I finally realized that this is EXACTLY the PERFECT example to explain how to build your personal collection. I felt an immediate connection and could not stop thinking about it.

If that happens to you, the piece that is affecting you this way probably belongs in your collection.

I'd like to finish by adding a few more tips when choosing pieces for your collection.

- Buy at least one piece that makes you feel NOSTALGIC.
- Buy something slightly OUTSIDE your comfort zone. Something that makes you feel a little GIDDY
- Buy at least one piece from an artist about your SAME AGE. It will be interesting to see how his or her art changes as you both go through world events and stages of life at the same time.
- Build relationships with galleries and artist studios.
- Collect with purpose, meet or research the artist, know WHAT you love and WHY you love it
- Make the pieces of a collection speak to each other and relate in some way. This can be through the artist, genre, Medium, color, image, country, or century.
- Use an INTERIOR DESIGNER as a shopping companion who will be a good sounding board and someone who can visualize your entire collection. A good designer can also identify when a client has an emotional connection to a piece, point out pieces that you overlook, as well as keep you in check by asking you the right questions. A designer may also bridge the intimidating gap between client and artist studio or gallery. A designer can introduce you to artists so that the experience as well as the art becomes more meaningful.
- DON'T use art to tie the décor of a room together. **Art stands on its own.**

Thank you so much for your kind attention."