

COUNTRY LIFE®

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EVERY THURSDAY £3

COLLECTIVE PASSIONS



Charles Saumarez Smith, director, National Gallery

'I don't really regard myself as a collector, more an accumulator of the bric-a-brac of a life spent in the arts and married to a bookbinder-turned-jeweller. I started collecting 18th-century drawings, encouraged by Matthew Rasterberg, a fellow student at Harvard and the Warburg Institute, who now advises American millionaire collectors. He introduced me to the dealers of Mason's Yard. I then turned to architectural prints. But now we tend to collect contemporary work, partly because, when I worked at the V&A, the Crafts Council shop was a convenient place to buy last-minute Christmas presents. Also, living in an early-18th-century house, we have taken the view that it is better to be surrounded by good-quality contemporary work than antiques that we can't afford.'

'Our first purchase was a painting by Breon O'Casey, who was at that time working as a jeweller and has only later turned more to painting. It was bought from Ann Hartree at the Croppindley Gallery. Since then, I have bought from Contemporary Applied Arts; my most recent purchase was a wonderful print by Grayson Perry. My advice would be: buy only what you like; remember that the crafts are relatively affordable; ignore fashion; there is a pleasure in use; and don't think of it as an investment, even if it is.'

Sir Christopher Frayling, head of the Royal College of Art



'I started collecting when I was at Cambridge in the 1960s, which was unusual as there wasn't a major contemporary art gallery in the city then. But there were small galleries and the design shop Printsevera. I began to buy prints, and later moved on to paintings. Now I collect 20th-century Irish art—Jack Yeats, Robert Gregory (Lady Gregory's son—a brilliant painter nobody knows about), and Paul Henry, and also 1960s British

works by artists such as Paolozzi, Bridget Riley and Robyn Denny. They are hung in my late-Georgian house in Bath, where we have replaced busy wallpaper with plain walls and have directed the lighting onto them, so that I can't read a thing, but I can see my paintings beautifully—lighting is so important. You should always choose pictures because you love them, and because you want to live with them in a deepening relationship over time.'

'If they later turns out to have been a good investment, that is an added bonus. But the love must come first. Think, too, about where pictures will be displayed: a placid image in a busy setting; a busy image in a placid space. And do the other pictures in the room "speak" to each other, or are they having an argument?'



Rebecca Hosack of Rebecca Hosack Gallery

'As a young girl growing up in Melbourne, I assembled a menagerie of glam animals. Since then, I've had (indeed, have) collecting passions for Australian "grass-root Rococo", Inuit pocket sculptures, West African gold-weights, 1960s Scandinavian glass, Mesoamerican textiles, and the extraordinary jewellery of Pippa Small.'

'It is a privilege to live among beautiful and interesting objects. I get such pleasure every day from using my collection of pottery by Ann Stokes. She is an inspired ceramicist, now in her eighties, whose work sings the joys of life and creation—Cretan-handled cups, decorated plates and burner dishes shaped like pigs. In painting, my enduring love is for contemporary Aboriginal art, which possesses such energy and diversity.'

'There remains an inevitable tension between the desire to accumulate and the wish to display things well. I love the way things resonate with each other, and enjoy setting up juxtapositions. And although I keep thinking that I will achieve a restrained minimal look in our narrow, 18th-century London home, my enthusiasts always get the better of me and it ends up pretty maximal.' MM