

If you love it, get it.
Act fast! Buy now!
Before it's gone. Before it's all gone.

How often do you go into a gallery or museum? If you are the type of culture junkie that's checking out LPM Gallery's web site, then probably a heck of a lot. And that's a good thing. But if you are the type who only goes into a gallery once in a blue moon (or kicking and screaming), well, this is still a good thing. In Ottawa, those of us in all facets of the art world are trying to make a difference. Be voice. Share an idea. Support production. Why? It's the right thing to do. For art makers, art lovers, art consumers and art sellers. Our city has a vibrant art scene, but there's room for improvement - and it's our responsibility to help make this change for the better happen. Truth be told, there isn't much of a commercial gallery scene here in Ottawa. When you think of the private galleries that sell art to collectors and museums, you may think of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver in Canada, and New York, London and Berlin on the international scene. But there is some fantastic private galleries right here in Ottawa. (And LPM Gallery is one of them!)

But it's a constant struggle to keep our piece of the culture pie from crumbling. For most in Canada, wondering if you're going to make it one more month is a daily thought. Just like any other retail store, private galleries need to sell art to pay their rent in order to continue showcasing artistic talent from our city and beyond. There's the huge element of entertainment and education when gallery-hopping about town. Private galleries love it when people come in to admire the work on the walls, or ask questions about the work or of the work, or are challenged by the work. But we love it when people fall in love with the work. For some gallery visitors, experienced or not, finding the "perfect" piece of art - one that they can't live without - is a beautiful and special thing. And you shouldn't let this opportunity pass you by. If you were in a mall and found the "perfect" pair of shoes or the "perfect" pair of jeans, would you pass up this opportunity to buy them? No, of course not. And the same thing should happen when you're in a gallery. The difference? Each piece of art is unique. Shoes and jeans are mass-produced and generally available somewhere else. But not art.

People often think that they can't buy art because they don't know anything about art. It doesn't matter. The first rule of thumb is "buy what you love". Your heart will tell you if it's right for you or not. Talk to your friends, your partner, your kids, the stranger on the other side of the exhibition, and even the person working in the gallery. Having a dialogue about the art is a great thing. This is what art is supposed to do: make us think, feel, and react.

People often think that they can't buy art because it's expensive. This isn't always the case. Yes, an original piece of art is a valuable and special thing. It's not a mass-produced reproduction that you buy at a bookstore, unroll and tack to your bedroom wall. But, art comes in all shapes and sizes. Art is made by all walks of life: the local "Sunday painter", fine art students, emerging artists looking for their big break and seasoned professionals with international acclaim. And with all of these differences, the range in price does vary. But there is always something, somewhere, that can be yours. Some serious collectors only buy a specific type of work, such as by subject matter or medium; and some collectors only buy the works of one specific artist. If you are just starting out, it will take time to flush out your likes and dislikes. Maybe works on paper are cheaper than works on canvas? Maybe you like paintings but not photography? Maybe you have the wall space for two-dimensional works, but not sculpture? Maybe you like portraits but not landscapes? If you buy a few small pieces, regardless of their content, theme or medium, you will be well on your way to finding out how to build your collection. Three big questions are usually asked by a gallery-hopper about a work of art: What is it? Who did it? How much is it? All good questions, but the only question that matters is the one you should ask yourself: Do I love it? If you do, then there are ways of making it yours. If it's cheap for you, buy it right away. If it's expensive for you, talk to the gallery owner about a payment plan - most good galleries will allow you to pay in three installments to make it easier for your budget. If it's too expensive for you, remind yourself why you love it keep this piece in your heart. You might just find something similar on the next wall, or the next gallery. But rarely will you find the same piece down the road... Again, art is unique. Don't hesitate. Don't be rash. But be informed and be smart. The right piece is going to be right for you.

People often think that private galleries are snobby white cubes with snobby employees who sell snobby art to snobby people. That might have been true in New York in the 80s, but this Ottawa in 2008. Ottawa is a friendly town with friendly galleries. (And at LPM Gallery, we're not shy or snobby in the least!) There are wide range galleries that present a wide range of art. Private galleries love it when people come in and look around. They love it when people ask questions, engage with the art and try to figure things out. But the bottom line is this: Private galleries love it when you buy the art!

Private galleries are a business that provides a service. They are just like that shop that sells that perfect pair of shoes or jeans. The gallery is essentially a shop that has to sell art to pay their rent. Period. In order to survive, we need folks like you to buy the art – the art that you've fallen in love with. Like that independent bookstore, or that unique clothing boutique, or that funky coffee shop, private galleries must sell their goods to survive. Big box stores and franchises rule Ottawa. But there are gems around town that sell unique and

special things. Challenge yourself: Take that chance and buy that piece of art you fall in love with. It will change your life for the better. And just like tattoos, once you get one, you'll want another. And another. And before you know it you will be a collector. And you will be helping keep a gallery alive for another month.

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