



From the Artist's Studio: The Art of Hanging Your Collection

*A*s an artist, I can tell you that there's one essential lesson we often miss in school: how to hang our artwork. I certainly didn't learn it during my studies! It wasn't until my Master's Exhibition that I found myself in a delightful pickle, trying to figure out how to display 24 paintings in a way that would truly resonate. Just when I thought I might lose my creative spark in a sea of confusion, a wonderful woman happened to wander into the space. With her warm smile and expert tips, she transformed my struggle into a stunning display that I will forever cherish.

That moment sparked a passion in me—not just for creating art, but for showcasing it beautifully. Now, hanging art has become one of my favorite aspects of the artistic journey! In this guide, I've compiled tried-and-true rules for creating a sophisticated display, along with playful tips on when to break those rules to inject a little pizzazz into your walls.

So, let's dive in and make your art truly sing! After all, every masterpiece deserves a captivating stage.



My go-to Hanging Hardware

Supplies

Hanging hardware: the hanging hardware you choose is really dependent on the type of wall you are hanging on and what the framer has chosen to include on the back of your artwork. If the artwork has been professionally framed, the likelihood is it is ready to be hung on the wall. But I would take an inventory of everything you want to hang before heading out to purchase any sort of hanging hardware. Either way, here is a list of what you'll need and my go-to options.

Tools:

Measuring tape

Level

Hammer

Phillips head screwdriver

Hanging Hardware:

Picture Hanging Hooks with nails

Command Picture hanging velcro

Self Drilling EZ anchors

***if you are starting from scratch, and you have a good amount of art that you wanna hang or you are doing something like a gallery wall, you can purchase a picture hanging kit with all the supplies you could possibly need, including all the ones listed above, and it's only about \$20 on amazon.

The 60 inch rule

Let's talk about hanging a large single painting on a big, bare wall. It can feel like a puzzle, right? And let's be honest—most people hang their art way too high! But don't worry, I've got a simple trick to help you nail it every time (pun intended).

The key is to hang your artwork so the center is exactly 60" above the floor. Why? That's the perfect eye-level height for most people, making it easy and comfortable to admire. If you're on the shorter side, like me, you can totally alter that rule and make it something like 57". Just be sure to keep it consistently 57" throughout your home.

So how do we actually do this? Here's the step-by-step:

1: First, turn your painting around and locate the centerline—this separates the top half of the painting from the bottom. You can draw a horizontal line there if you want..that line indicates the perfect eye-level - 60 inches. So that's where we want it to end up.

2: Next, find the hanging wire or D-hooks on the back. Measure the distance from the centerline to the top of the wire when pulled taut. We'll call that distance Y.

3: Now, add Y to 60 inches. That total is X—and X marks the spot! This is where your hook, nail, or screw goes.

For example, if the wire is 15 inches above the centerline, then $60 + 15 = 75$. So, you'll place your hanging hardware at 75 inches from the floor.

And voilà! Your painting is now at the perfect eye level for viewing—and looking fabulous.



The Museum Wall

Museum Wall

When you visit a museum, the art is always arranged so elegantly—perfectly balanced and harmonious. That’s because museum walls follow the 60-inch rule, making it easy for viewers to move seamlessly from one piece to the next. You can easily recreate this at home!

The secret to a stunning museum wall is consistency. Keep the spaces between each artwork even and ample - give your pieces room to breathe while keeping the overall display cohesive. I like to begin with my largest piece in the center, as a showpiece, then working down to smaller, or staggering the sizes on either side. Hanging artwork in a single row is a timeless choice, especially if you have plenty of wall space. And Now you have a a stunning exhibition in your home and each piece can be viewed beautifully.

Let’s talk about hanging artwork above a couch—it’s a little different from our usual 60-inch rule. Why? Because we don’t want the couch to overlap the artwork, making things look crowded or awkward. Instead, there’s a new rule to follow:

Leave 8 inches of space between the top of the couch and the bottom of your artwork. This creates a comfortable, balanced look that's still perfect for viewing.

If you're adding more pieces on either side of the main artwork, keep everything within the width of the couch (or the end tables if you have them). This keeps the display feeling cohesive and grounded.

Whether you're hanging a single painting or creating a gallery above your couch, this rule ensures your space looks polished and intentional—and perfectly cozy for lounging!

The 8 inch rule

Now, let's talk about other layout and furniture solutions. An entryway for instance with a console table, where you drop your Keyes and mail, is perfect for artwork. In this case we have two smaller pieces that we'll hang side by side, centered about 8 inches above the table. It gives your entryway a clean and sophisticated look.

You can also hang your artwork in a grid - especially if you have an even number of same sized artworks. And don't forget the option to Lean an artwork. Especially larger pieces that may be difficult to hang. It's a great look that you can also layer with a smaller leaning onto one side of its frame. Not your style, you can always try it out for a while and hang it later :)



The Grid

Grid Wall

Now, let's dive back into that grid format!

Grids are a fantastic option for sets of paintings that share a similar size or theme. I like to think of a grid as one unified piece of art—it creates a sense of order and balance. For instance, if you're hanging four paintings, try arranging them two above and two below. Make sure the center of the grid is at eye level, so the spacing between the top row and bottom row feels balanced and natural.

If you have more artwork, you can extend your grid horizontally. Just stick to the 60-inch rule, and everything will look harmonious and polished.



The Gallery Wall

Gallery/Salon Wall

The gallery wall is, hands down, my favorite way to display artwork in my home. Sure, I have a few pieces hung museum-style, but there's something about the casual sophistication of a gallery wall that I really enjoy.

What makes a gallery wall so special is how personal it is. Your artwork, of course, is deeply personal—but a modern gallery wall takes it a step further. It can include anything you view as art: a vintage platter from your grandmother, a handmade puppet from your last vacation, or any unique treasures you love. It's all about showcasing your personality.

Think of it as an installation of your life and style on the wall. I like to gather the artwork and objects I want to use, play around with their arrangement, and create a layout that feels just right. And here's a tip: don't be afraid to edit. Sometimes less is more, and a well-curated wall can make a stronger impact.

In a Gallery wall or more historically - a Salon Style display, art is densely packed to maximize space, echoing the grandeur of the French Royal Academy of Art in the Louvre going back to the mid 1700's. Artworks were hung floor to ceiling, mere inches apart, creating a vibrant tapestry of creativity.

A Gallery Wall is a fantastic option, especially if you have a diverse collection of art! It's wonderfully accommodating to pieces of all shapes and sizes, and the best part is that not everything has to be framed. Feel free to get creative—incorporate fun elements like sculptures, shelves, or anything else you can hang with a nail. I've even included whimsical puppets in my own Gallery Walls before!

But it's also a wonderful option if you are just starting your art collection because you can build on it as you go :)

1: Gather Your Collection

Start by selecting the artwork and objects you want to include. Look for pieces that hold personal meaning—whether it's your own art, photos, or unique items like a vintage mirror or a quirky keepsake. Lay everything out on the floor first to play with the arrangement.

2: Find Your Focal Point

Every gallery wall needs a star—a piece that draws the eye and anchors the design. It could be your largest painting, a bold print, or a cherished item. Place this at the center or slightly off-center, and build the layout around it.

3: Keep Spacing Consistent

Aim for even spacing between pieces. About 2 to 4 inches works well, depending on the size of your wall and artwork. This consistency creates a sense of order and balance, even with a mix of different shapes and sizes.

4: Test Before You Commit

Use butcher paper (or even wrapping paper) to make templates for each piece of art to mock up your layout on the wall. This allows you to experiment without making holes. Once you're happy with the arrangement, you're ready to hang!

5: Embrace Your Personality

A gallery wall is meant to be dynamic and personal. Don't be afraid to mix styles or textures—frames, unframed canvases, or even shadow boxes. It's a reflection of you, so let it feel playful and unique.

A simple way to plan the layout before adding holes to your wall is to use butcher paper or even wrapping paper to make an exact template of each item you'll be hanging. Be sure to mark exactly where the hanging hardware is—whether it's a wire, a keyhole, or a sawtooth hanger.

Next, tape these paper templates to the wall with painter's tape. This lets you easily adjust and rearrange until the placement feels just right. Once you're happy with the layout, use the marks on the templates to add your mounting hardware directly through the paper.

When arranging, I like to keep the spacing between each piece fairly even. No large gaps—just a nice, consistent rhythm that feels balanced and cohesive.

Another tip? Stagger your pieces! Avoid having more than two items line up directly with one another. This creates a more dynamic and interesting composition.

Now, hang your artwork, peel off the paper guides, and voilà—polished! Personality! perfection!

All right, now let's try creating a gallery wall above a couch—or really, any type of furniture. The same concept applies!

We've got our couch and a great mix of paintings and personal items already on the wall. But as we take a step back, we notice some gaps. Maybe you've got new artwork or personal treasures that need to be added.

That's the beauty of a gallery wall—it's flexible! You can always build on it, adjust it, and add to it over time. It's a living installation that evolves with your space and your story.



What NOT to do example

What NOT to do

What I often see are walls with lots of artwork, but hung at odd levels. Some pieces are too close together, others are not, most are crooked, or things are tucked behind furniture. This is tragic to me. Especially when you love your artwork so much. It ends up feeling unbalanced and chaotic.

What we want to do is bring rhythm and flow to the space. We want the artwork to be beautiful and perfectly fit your space and your personality. So, let's make that happen!

The first step I like to take is finding artwork of similar size and shape, then hanging those together using the grid format we talked about earlier. This simple change gives us a clean, formal look. Now, this could absolutely work as is, but there's something about the formality—the rigid right angles and structure—that I want to soften.

To do that, let's bring in our personal items - most of which are more organic in shape. These items will soften the overall look and make the space feel more approachable. Oh, another tip is to take those pieces that feel a little heavier because of darker colors or mood and move those down, paintings lighter and softer in color can go above. We've used the same artwork, but Now your wall is infused with personality, showcasing your love for the pieces you're displaying, and make everything feel a little more welcoming.

So there you have it! 'The art of hanging your collection'

I hope you're Feeling inspired... but maybe you're still not sure where to start? You can BOOK A CONSULTATION with me, We'll design the perfect layout for your space. We'll turn your walls into a work of art together!"

Or maybe you want a museum or gallery wall but still haven't found the right artwork for your home? Maybe you'd like a Melanie Stimmell Original?? Actually, almost all the pieces that I used to create this video are still available. You can check out all of my available originals or my published prints (which are all available framed and ready to go, and a fraction of the price of an original) - both available through PARK WEST GALLERY. But you can Reach out for a personalized ARTWORK CONSULTATION because our walls deserve something special!" And I'd love to be a part of that.

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Thank you so much for joining me here!

I appreciate you and can't wait to see what you create! share your before-and-after with me on social media! Don't forget to tag me — @MELANIESVL — I'd love to see your vision come to life

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