

THE TUTORIAL

Getting the Hang of It

DISPLAY IS AN ART IN ITSELF.

The symptom is easy to spot: bare walls in an otherwise well-appointed room. Maybe it's a fear of marring a pristine surface with a nail, or perhaps it's simply uncertainty about what to place where. Whatever the reason, amassing a collection of art or photography often seems to be easier than hanging it. Julie Saul knows no such fear. As the owner of the Julie Saul Gallery in Chelsea for 20 years, she has hung more than 5,000 works of art, by her own estimate. Of particular interest is this wall in her Greenwich Village apartment, opposite her dining room table, reserved for small works (the largest is 17 by 20 inches). "It evolved organically," recalls Saul, whose approach is intuitive; she's not one to plan out an arrangement in advance. But she is one to take something down if it doesn't look good. Here, she offers a few guidelines to get you started. **CAROLE NICKSIN**

1

Plot your course

"Most of the pieces on this wall have a personal meaning for me, and how they are hung helps express that meaning," Saul explains. She bought the Hellen van Meene photograph of a rabbit's grave (center) shortly after her father's death.

2

Embrace change

"If you leave something in the same place too long, you don't really see it anymore," Saul says. Moving art around is easier if you have the right supplies, like brass-plated professional picture hangers (\$1.26 for three; www.dickblick.com).

3

Play around

Small pieces, like the white-framed work by Penelope Umbrico, should be at eye level. "Bolder, more graphic pieces can go further up," Saul says. Aim for even spacing (about three and a half inches here).

4

Stay focused

Saul likes to keep the attention on the work, not the frame. "A large work might need to have a more significant frame," she says, "but with a small work, I think a heavy frame draws attention away from the piece."



5

Mix it up

"Originally, I had only black-and-white photos and pencil drawings on this wall," Saul says. "I wanted to keep it minimal. But that looked very drab, so I added the color photos and paintings." Note how Saul dispersed the color works evenly throughout.

6

Keep track

Even if you're not collecting as an investment, it's a good idea to label everything you acquire. "You always think you'll remember who it's by and when you bought it, but you never do," Saul says. When you buy a work, tape the receipt to the back of the frame.

7

Take care

"If you drop a work that's framed with glass, it's likely to get damaged," says Saul, who prefers acrylic (like Plexiglas). Be sure it's UV-treated to protect against fading. If the art is near a sunny window, you might want to invest in UV protection for your windows. Ask your framer to use archival-quality materials. Acids in some paper can cause damage and premature deterioration.