

Eye of the beholder

Upcoming LA Art Show will help visitors connect the images they see with the things they love most

By [Joanna Beresford](#) 01/14/2010



Jeanne
Vadeboncoeur, "We
all need some Gummi
to lean on"

More than 15,000 works from all genres and periods, including modern and contemporary, will be shown at the internationally acclaimed Los Angeles Art Show Jan. 21 through Jan. 24 at the LA Convention Center.

Huh? What's genre, period, modern, contemporary — what does all that mean? And what does it mean, more specifically, to me or you? Um, should we be at this event? Should we buy, or look or listen to people talking about all the art?

OK, a lot of people are familiar, to some extent, with certain terms as they relate to art, literature, philosophy and architecture — like modern, post-modern, classical, and so on. Some people aren't so familiar, however, and the lingo sounds like gibberish. But, in either case, or somewhere in between, what's the relevance to my life, my family, my home, I've been kind of wondering lately, of any kind of art and visual expression?

What's the point for the life, family, homes of my friends and readers?

You know, I've really wrestled with this question throughout a lifetime of existential investigation. Then I struggled with it again this afternoon as I put together this particular column. So I called my friend Christian Hohmann, who owns an art gallery in Palm Desert, grew up among artists, dealers and collectors in Europe, and is hosting an exhibit at the LA Art Show next week. I asked him: Why is it important to have art in our homes and our lives?

"Oh, that's easy," he replied. "Art has been a part of our lives since the stone ages. Art is an expression of everything we are. We have always wanted to be surrounded by imagery. It helps us reflect on who and what we are. Art means many things to many people, but it always provokes thought and emotion and reflection, and we always desire to look at imagery in almost every aspect of our lives."

I told him to shut up if it was so easy to describe. I told him to shut up before he compared me to a caveman — in an unfavorable light, no less, by describing my ignorance about basic principles of symbolism and so forth. Why didn't I think of all that myself? Anyway, in the end I also thanked him for adding an entire and very meaningful paragraph to my story. Of course, I only thanked him because I think he's very smart and very right about this subject.

Images, color, shape, form, narrative, texture — other stuff I'm probably forgetting. I hardly think we can live without these things, especially in our homes.

"People can come to this show and prepare to design their homes

and attend lectures,” says Los Angeles Art Show producer, Kim Martindale. “I think it’s very engaging for people to form a collection of art in their homes that involves concept, and that encourages dialogue with friends and with oneself. I see LA changing direction, looking more toward that direction of challenging and interactive works of art.”

The 15th annual Los Angeles Art Show is an encyclopedic art event that features more than 130 international exhibitors, a lecture series, a special events program, sculpture garden and evening events to engage artists, collectors and community members. The 2010 opening night preview Wednesday benefits the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and Inner-City Arts, with additional beneficiaries to be named at the event. It’s the largest art fair on the West Coast, attracting connoisseurs and those who are simply curious, with works encompassing a range that includes the efforts of emerging artists as well as the cherished accomplishments of familiar artists like Jasper Johns, Robert Motherwell, Rembrandt, Ed Ruscha, Julian Schnabel and Emerson Weolffer.

Media include sculpture, painting, mixed media, video art and more. As well as my favorite: people-watching.

Martindale and Hohmann — and probably lots of other artists and collectors — agree that the more you see, the more you know and the more you appreciate. Therefore, the more deeply you will be moved by works of art and the more you will understand what particularly connects with you and belongs in your life.

“Most of all taste is something that develops with what we see,” explains Christian. “Like our appetite for wine, food, music or cigars. Exposure to images helps us to develop a visual and spiritual repertoire of recognition and meaning.”