

“Simple Rules of Collecting”

Weekly Times Column

By Warren Joel

I am often asked how to go about collecting and what will appreciate in value. Well, I don't have a crystal ball to see what will happen in the future, but I have refined collecting down to four simple rules. These will not necessarily guarantee a good financial investment, but hopefully give you an investment that you can enjoy.

Buy what you like. I call this my golden rule, because you should never break this rule. I do not understand why you would buy an “ugly” painting because it was cheap or because you thought it would be a good financial investment. It will always be ugly to you.

At this point I need to talk about fashion, because the collectable world is run by fashions. 20 years ago paintings of gum trees were the hot collectable item, now very much out of fashion. However, the great Hans Heysen of the gum trees will always be a good painting and an enjoyable one - if you like gum trees!

Now the next three rules do require some research and knowledge about what you are collecting.

Availability. Your item needs to be hard to find. If you're collectable is in every antique shop, in every country town it is just too easy to find. We are looking for that special item and that requires some work to find.

Rarity. How many were produced? To have any hope of a good return we need limited editions. A good example of limited edition could be an etching, up to around 100 editions. This is the reason why prints are not a collectable item - there are just too many out there.

Condition. Not a good idea to collect broken china or glass. Some items can have a good restoration but would be worth more in the original condition. A nice antique sideboard with a good restoration is still a collectable item.

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Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2002 different areas of collectables.

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