



What Size Art Do I Need?

Not an easy answer.

There are plenty of online resources guiding you to calculating "correct" wall art placement. And yet you've come here for my opinion on the topic! You'll find that I do not have a conventional approach. Feel free to continue to use the online calculators. I'm hoping to get you thinking about the process with a fresh perspective, which is comprised of: your gut instinct, a few basic rules of composition, and a touch of drama. You are a lover of art; display it to get the attention it deserves.

I. Much Bigger Than You Think

Most people choose wall art that is too small for the space. We've been conditioned to think more space is needed around art than is necessary. Or maybe, we've been viewing art more as an accessory than a focal point. The margin is the space around the art, between the outer edge of the frame and the next obstruction to the left or right (e.g. the wall edge, a window, a door, another painting). The margin can be equal to or less than one third the width of the art you're hanging. In other words, if you're hanging a piece that is 30" wide, there can be as little as 10" between your art and the nearest obstruction. Push the limits of the margins, and your art will fill the space adequately.



HELPFUL TIP

When you have wall art that needs a home, cut a piece of cardboard or poster board the exact size of the art, and use painter's tape attach it to the wall in a few spots to see where it looks best, before committing.



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2. Multiple Small Pieces Grouped Together

This is commonly referred to as a gallery wall. Gallery walls are beautiful when they are hung with purpose, not just random. Start with your largest three pieces and arrange the others around those. The biggest mistake when hanging a gallery wall is having too much space between pieces. The collection of art becomes the whole piece, and the margin rule (see #1) is to be completely ignored.

An alternative to the gallery wall is a grid. This works best with an even number of pieces that are the same size, arranged as if they were on the same horizontal and vertical track.



3.A Non-Standard Dimension

There is no better way to create a dramatic effect and make your art memorable than choosing a non-standard size and/or proportion. Very long, narrow pieces, circular pieces, horizontal art, and even squares can create drama because they are an unexpected surprise.



HELPFUL TIP

Follow me on Pinterest, where I've curated a board called "Great Use of Art in a Room". There is inspiration there!
pinterest.com/acolburn