

avoid. "There are many art galleries out there who are all selling the same published limited edition prints that are not that great and some of these pieces can be as much as £500. These type of giclée prints are created using light fast inks and published in big publishing houses with no involvement from the artist apart from the signature.

"I can't strictly say they won't make clients money, but I believe there are better ways to invest your money. For example, you can buy a beautiful little Henry Moore etching of an elephant or sheep from around £700."

Micky also suggests buying art for your children, and, being a girl after her own word, she tells me: "I have purchased three pieces for my son (including two David Bromleys which cost between £350-£450 each and which now sell for just under £1,000) and I bought them because I love the artist and hopefully one day my son will feel the same way too. It's not necessarily because I think the money could have been better spent on the art than it is in the bank it's because there is a passion behind it."

Whether its Damien Hirst, David Bromley, or Stanley Dove, there is an artist to suit everybody's taste and pocket, and you have to admit an original work of art is always going to be more aesthetically pleasing than a bank statement.

Red Gallery will next exhibit at the 20/21 International Art Fair, at The Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London, on February 19-22. Micky also suggests visiting the London Art Fair, at the Business Design Centre, Islington, London, between January 14-18.

For more information visit www.redgallery.co.uk

Galleries

As Micky explains you can find a gallery on almost any high-street, but finding a good gallery can be difficult. Here are a few suggestions to get you on the right track:



Just a stone's throw from Harpenden train station, the **A & K Wilson Gallery** (01582 760824) is an intimate, friendly gallery promoting emerging local artists as well as some more established names, including *Dragons' Den* survivor and pop icon sculptor Guy Portelli. If you fancy following in Micky's footsteps and snapping up a David Bromley, then head

to the **Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery** (020 7436 4899), in Fitzroy Square, London, where he is just one of many exciting artists represented. Micky also suggests visiting the **Barry Keene Gallery** in Henley, a "very high end dealer" specialising in fine paintings, watercolours and much more from the 18th Century up to the modern day (01491 577119). Elsewhere, the **Catto Gallery** in Hampstead is one of London's leading contemporary fine art galleries (020 7431 5620) and, staying in the area **Gallery K**, which promotes contemporary Greek art in London, has built up a sterling reputation for offering quality original work (020 7794 4949). Back in Hertfordshire, **The McNeill Gallery**, in Radlett, has an impressive selection of Beryl Cook limited edition prints, as well as the exquisite painter Alex Rennie on its books (01923 859594), and if you fancy taking a trip to a more unusual venue, visit the newly-opened **Copper Beech Art Gallery** in Little Wymondley, near Hitchin. Situated in a semi-listed barn, the gallery boasts original work by local talent such as Haydn Dickenson and Lloyd Hall (01438 727700).



Micky in front of her large David Bromley screenprint

Micky's Top Tips

1 Buy art only because you love it! A painting is for life, don't look at its economic potential alone. Remember, original art works are affordable; for example original limited edition etchings by renowned artists such as Henry Moore can be purchased from as little as £700.

2 Educate yourself with knowledge from the dealers. Ask about the artist's history, find out how the piece was made, its medium and the measurements. Many galleries now offer interest-free instalment schemes so it's also worth enquiring what forms of payments are available.

3 Purchase art from the right place; galleries, art fairs and auction houses. The dealers from reputable galleries and auction houses will help source and advise on the best works. There is an immense selection of different styles, mediums, sizes and prices, so also use the internet to make comparisons.

4 Check quality of the work; in particular for photography, original prints, lithographs, etchings and sculpture. Make sure the work is signed, dated and, if appropriate, has stamp of the sculptor. Also a certificate of provenance from the gallery/expert. As a guideline when purchasing original prints, low numbered editions are generally better to acquire. If the artist was deceased after production, the editions will be cheaper and less interesting to collectors.

5 Buy art that makes a statement; often artists will paint or sculpt to express political and social views. This could be an opening to buy an artwork that confronts the principles of art.

6 When buying from young emerging artists, look for a unique and constant style or form. Ultimately, you want to find an artist who in due course can be identified by his or her technique.

7 Finally, think about purchasing artwork for your children as investments for them. Original paintings, prints and sculpture can be sourced at a very affordable price.