

How To Commission An Artist : 10 Tips for Success

After completing several successful commissions, I realized that I could help collectors who are new to the process of commissioning original art. I have combined my knowledge and experience of how to achieve successful art commissions with research of other's insights into this guide for you. Commissioning art is a great way to get something unique and special just for you.

"I was 38 when I first commissioned a painting," says Olivier Dupon, now 44. "I was living in Sydney when I came across the work of a young artist, Mark Alsweiler. I loved his style, so I told him to paint whatever he liked. Two months later he came up with a gigantic painting in a style that I did not like at all. I never put it up. Then, just as I was returning to London, he had a show and there was the painting I'd imagined! So of course I bought it."

The lesson here is that commissioning a custom artwork requires careful planning, communication through all stages and verification steps in the process to ensure a successful outcome. The process is complex but it does not have to be intimidating. Here are 10 tips to help you in the process.

1. Decide if you want fine functional crafts, 2-D Art, or 3-D Art.

What need are you trying to fulfill? What styles of art would best fit into the available space in your home or office? How much space do you have for your art? What would you enjoy the most on a daily basis? Do you want outdoor art?

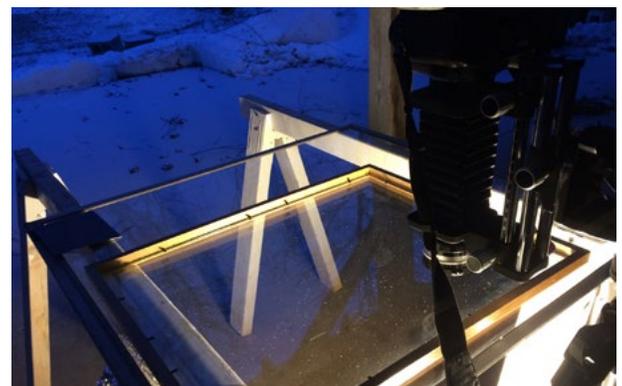
2. What color schemes do you prefer? Research shows that colors affect your mood. What kind of environment are you trying to generate? Do you want the space to be relaxing, energizing or something else? Reference the psychology of color guide on page 3.

If you already have significant pieces of art or furnishings in your space, do you have specific colors in your room you would like to coordinate with?

3. Find an appropriate artist. You can commission art online or work with a local artist whose studio you can visit and you can meet in person. Commissioning custom



Handpainted Snowflake Photographs Commission by Ivana Damien George



Night Time Photography of Falling Snowflakes by Ivana Damien George

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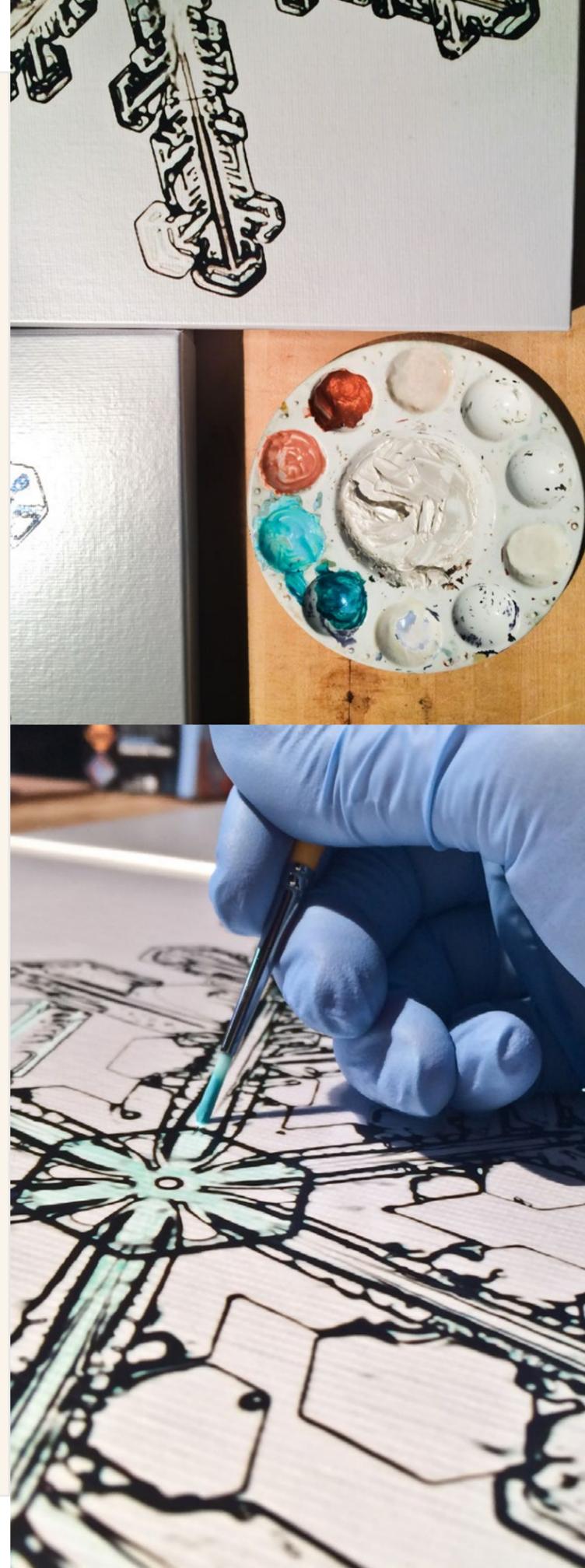
artwork should be fun and fulfilling. You need to find someone whom you can trust to deliver that experience and delight you with more than you could have imagined by using their creativity and vision. This is a collaboration between you and the artist. You need to make sure you feel comfortable doing business with the artist. To research artists online, try Instagram. To find local artists go to open studio events and art exhibits. If you find an artist whose work you like ask if you can visit their studio. A studio visit will give you a good idea of the range, styles and quality of artwork that they are capable of producing. You should try to get to know the artist. You want to work with someone who is friendly and professional. If you like their artwork overall and you like them as a person, then approach the subject of a custom commission. Ask if they have done any commissions. If they have, it is more likely that things will go smoothly.

5. Communicate very clearly. In the initial discussions communicate your desires regarding media, art style, size and color schemes. Ask the artist to create a proposal for an artwork that would fulfill your desires including a sketch, mockup or maquette to demonstrate what the artwork would look like. Remember this is a collaboration. Provide parameters for size, color scheme and themes. Do not demand total control of the outcome. It is important to allow the artist creative flexibility. Be prepared by providing a photograph and measurements of the location where the artwork will be displayed. Then schedule a follow up meeting to review the proposal and negotiate the details.

6. Negotiate an approximate time line for completion. It is important to plan the timeline but to also be patient if the artwork takes longer than expected to be completed. Artworks in some media can take an exceptionally long time to create, and also certain art media take a very long time to dry.

7. Payment expectations... You should expect to spend more on commissioned art than for pre-made art you would buy in a gallery. You will need to pay a non-refundable deposit of at least 33%. If you should back out of the deal, do not expect to get this money back.

8. Review work in progress! Negotiate a review



and approval process for the work in progress. You should ideally visit the artist's studio 3-4 times during the process of creation to approve the progress. If you work with an artist who isn't local, use video conferencing to virtually visit the studio to see work in progress. The artist may ask for incremental payments at these visits, which is reasonable.

9. Negotiate a satisfaction guarantee. This does not mean that you can get as many changes as you want for free. Typically artists will agree to include two changes without extra payment but you should negotiate this in advance. Also negotiate how much it will cost for additional changes beyond the agreed amount.

10. Use a written agreement. In all these discussions, it's easy to forget some of the details and this can lead to misunderstandings later. A written agreement is a professional way to record all of your verbal agreements and therefore avoid costly mistakes and disagreements down the road. Artists with experience doing commissions will probably have a commission agreement that can be modified to suit your negotiations. If they don't it might be a sign that they are not experienced doing commissions.

I wish you the best of luck in completing a successful commission! Please let me know if I can be of help to you.

Sincerely,

Ivana Damien George
Interdisciplinary Artist

Sources:

- <http://www.christies.com/features/How-to-commission-a-piece-for-your-home-6347-1.aspx>
- <http://www.artbusiness.com/privcom.html>
- http://www.gwennseemel.com/index.php/blog/comments/commission_an_artist/

<p>Red</p> <p>Red has more personal associations than any other color. Perceived as a stimulant, red is inherently exciting and the amount of red is directly related to the level of energy perceived. Red draws attention and a keen use of red as an accent can immediately focus attention on a particular element.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases enthusiasm Stimulates energy and can increase the blood pressure, respiration, heartbeat, and pulse rate Encourages action and confidence Provides a sense of protection from fears and anxiety <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red is the highest arc of the rainbow. Red is the first color you lose sight of at twilight. The longest wavelength of light is red. Feng shui recommends painting the front door of a home red to invite prosperity to the residents. Bees can't see the color red, but they can see all other bright colors. Red flowers are usually pollinated by birds, butterflies, bats, and wind, rather than bees. 	<p>Yellow</p> <p>Yellow shines with optimism, enlightenment, and happiness. Shades of golden yellow carry the promise of a positive future. Yellow will advance from surrounding colors and instill optimism and energy, as well as spark creative thoughts.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulates mental processes Stimulates the nervous system Activates memory Encourages communication <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the tenth century in France, the doors of traitors and criminals were painted yellow. Yellow signifies "ladies" in Greece's culture and "jealousy" in France's culture. Yellow is psychologically the happiest color in the color spectrum. The comic book character Green Lantern was afraid of the color yellow. 75% of the pencils sold in the United States are painted yellow.
<p>Orange</p> <p>Orange, a close relative of red, sparks more controversy than any other hue. There is usually strong positive or negative association to orange and true orange generally elicits a stronger "love it or hate it" response than other colors. Fun and flamboyant orange radiates warmth and energy.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stimulates activity Stimulates appetite Encourages socialization <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interior dash lights on older model Subaru cars were orange. Orange is the color that means "high" in the color-coded threat system established by presidential order in March 2002. In the United States Army, orange is the color of the United States Army Signal Corps. Safety orange is a color used to set things apart from their surroundings. Agent Orange, an herbicide named after the color of its containers, was used in a systematic medical program organized by the US military that ran from 1961 through 1973 in Vietnam. 	<p>Green</p> <p>Green occupies more space in the spectrum visible to the human eye than most colors, and is second only to blue as a favorite color. Green is the pervasive color in the natural world, making it an ideal backdrop in interior design because we are so used to seeing it everywhere.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soothes Relaxes mentally, as well as physically Helps alleviate depression, nervousness, and anxiety Offers a sense of renewal, self-control, and harmony <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The solid green flag of Libya is currently the only national flag of a single color. There is a superstition that sewing with green thread on the eye of a fashion show brings bad luck to the design house. Green was the favorite color of George Washington, the first President of the United States. Green is the color used for night-vision goggles because the human eye is most sensitive to and able to discern the most shades of this color. NASCAR racers have shared a bias against the color green for decades. Reported by it began after a 1920 accident in Beverly Hills, California that killed defending Indianapolis 500 champion Gaston Chevrolet. It was the first known racing accident in the United States to kill two drivers, and Chevrolet reportedly was driving a green car.
<p>White</p> <p>White projects purity, cleanliness, and neutrality. Doctors don white coats, brides traditionally wear white gowns, and a white picket fence surrounds a safe and happy home.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aids mental clarity Encourages us to clear clutter or obstacles Evokes purification of thoughts or actions Enables fresh beginnings <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A white flag is universally recognized as a symbol of truce. According to Pantone Inc., white is the best selling color for the classic American outfit. More shades of white are available commercially than any other color. White clothing typically becomes translucent when wet. The appearance of white in a dream is thought to represent happiness at home. White castles are a symbol of achievement, destiny perfectly fulfilled, and spiritual perfection. Originally, scientists wore beige coats. In the late 19th century, medical professionals chose white ones. The color white was chosen because of the idea of hope and expectations for healing and recovery that the physicians would bring. 	<p>Blue</p> <p>Blue is seen as trustworthy, dependable, and competent. The color of oceans and sky, blue is perceived as a constant in our lives. As the collective color of the sky, it evokes rest and can cause the body to produce chemicals that are calming.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calms and soothes Cools Aids intuition <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue is the least gender-specific color, having equal appeal to both men and women. Blue is the favorite color choice for toothbrushes. Oaks are the only birds that can see the color blue. People are often more productive in blue rooms. Mosquitoes are attracted to the color blue twice as much as to any other color.
<p>Gray</p> <p>Gray is the color of intellect, knowledge, and wisdom. It is perceived as long-lasting, classic, and often as sleek or refined. It is a color that is dignified, conservative, and carries authority. Gray is a perfect neutral, which is why designers often use it as a background color.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsettles Creates expectations <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New York Times is sometimes called "Gray Lady." Gray represents non-involvement, giving it a formal authority. Gray is associated with intellect and the brain is composed of "gray matter." Gray is representative of pessimism. The human eye can distinguish about 500 shades of gray. 	<p>Purple</p> <p>Purple embodies the balance of red's stimulation and blue's calm. With a range of mystic and royal qualities, purple is a color often well liked by very creative or eccentric types and is the favorite color of adolescent girls.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uplifts Calms the mind and nerves Offers a sense of spirituality Encourages creativity <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purple was the royal color of the Caesars. Purple was the color of the first dye made by man. Purple is the color of Madison Square Garden and seating for VIPs was once covered in purple. Purple is the color of the highest denomination - \$5,000. During the Silver Age of comic books, those with purple on their covers sold better.
<p>Black</p> <p>Black is authoritative and powerful; because black can evoke strong emotions, too much can be overwhelming. Black represents a lack of color, the primordial void, emptiness. It is a classic color for clothing, possibly because it makes the wearer appear thinner and more sophisticated.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> makes one feel inconspicuous provides a restful emptiness is mysterious by evoking a sense of potential and possibility <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In England, taxi cabs are traditionally black. Black implies weight -- people will think a black box weighs more than a white one. The color black is associated with sophistication and power - tuxedos, limousines, judges robes, and priests' attire are all typically black. The color black is so widely regarded as sophisticated in fashion that the term "the new black" is often used to describe and give merit to a color trend. One old wives' tale claims that if a woman is buried wearing the color black, she'll come back to haunt the family. 	<p>Pink</p> <p>Bright pinks, like the color red, stimulate energy and can increase the blood pressure, respiration, heartbeat, and pulse rate. They also encourage action and confidence.</p> <p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bright pinks, like the color red, stimulate energy and can increase the blood pressure, respiration, heartbeat, and pulse rate. They also encourage action and confidence. Pink has been used in prison holding cells to effectively reduce erratic behavior. <p>Facts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1947, fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli introduced the color "hot pink" to west-ern fashion. Pink encourages friendliness while discouraging aggression and ill-will. Since the color pink is said to have a tranquilizing effect, sports teams sometimes use pink to paint the locker room used by opposing teams. Studies of the color pink suggest that male weightlifters seem to lose to weight in pink rooms, while women weightlifters tend to become stronger around the color. Patrasia said better when they come out of pink boxes or served on pink plates (it only works with sweets) because pink makes us crave sugar.