

# MANSION GLOBAL

## Presenting Prized Collectibles

Rather than let your curios gather dust, use them to infuse a room with personal character

BY JENNIFER TZESES | ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ON FEBRUARY 24, 2021 | [MANSION GLOBAL](#)



*At his own home in Sullivan County, Benoist F. Drut displays a pottery collection in similarly scaled groupings for a cohesive presentation.*  
MICHAEL MUNDY

A collection is a precious thing meant to be savored and appreciated—not hidden away in a dusty drawer. Displaying it loud and proud not only puts your treasures out for all to see, but it can also lend character to the room in which it's exhibited.

“Collections show an owner’s passion and artistic expression, whether it is contemporary glass, antique toys, etc.,” said Guy Regal, a New York-based dealer of fine art and antiques. “By displaying these collections in a room, the owner illustrates that passion.”

For ideas on the best ways to display your curio to its best advantage, follow these tips from the design pros.

## Find Connection With the Space Itself

“Whether the collection is of rare wines, fashion accessories, artwork or books, it provides a context and sets the mood inside the space.

“For a room to look cohesive, there needs to be some kind of link between the collection and the interior space that hosts it. It could be the color palette or the materials used in the room, which create connections with the items on display. These elements can then form the basis of a strong narrative for other parts of the scheme.

“Different collections will require different displays. A large uninterrupted space on long walls or shelves can be ideal to host art collections. Bespoke furniture items can also provide interesting locations as these will be tailored to the size and type of collection and provide a focus for the room.

“High ceilings and spacious rooms with extensive walls can be ideal hosts for paintings and pictures or can offer a great backdrop for sculptures. Darker, cozier spaces can be ideal for keeping a wine collection or fashion accessories.”



Designed by Rupert Martineau, this bespoke office features bookcases with tomes as well as treasures.

*Mandy Toh*

— Rupert Martineau, senior associate project head of residential interiors at SHH London

## **Create a Dialogue**

“When you have a collection of rare and unique pieces, regardless of if they are from the same period or are of the same style, it is easy to mix them in the same room because they are all of the same quality. When creating an environment, I often think about the dialogues of objects, carefully considering how they speak to one another within a room.

“I love displaying a variety of different items that on the surface are quite different but actually relate well to one another. For example, I took two square table bases that were both geometric but very different, and I mixed them as if they were a pair and it really worked in the space. This same principle can apply to color, design, motif and shape—as long as there is something in common, you can mix them confidently to create a very cohesive room. There are no rules when it comes to mixing periods, styles, colors and materials. Follow your instincts and approach the design of a space in a pragmatic way. What looks good on a floor plan may not necessarily look great in person.

“I like to create a landscape of objects of varying heights when grouping collections. For instance, if you have a collection of vases and they are all the same height, display some on small plexiglass cubes, increasing the height variation makes it more dramatic and interesting. You can even try using a small wooden box to change the heights of some of the items you want to display. My philosophy is if it’s too perfect, be sure to mess it up. You do not want to have anything in your home that looks like a store display.

“I like to let a few of the most special objects take the spotlight and then build the rest of the room around them. Your eye should move easily from these headliner works to the rest of the pieces in the space. Not everything can be the focus of the room or it will feel overwhelming and chaotic, so mixing different types of works can create a sense of rhythm in a space.”

— **Benoist F. Drut, owner of Maison Gerard Gallery in New York**

## **Mix It Up**

“Grouping collections can take the place of a piece of art on a wall or fill a table. For example, collections of Blue Delft have been hung to cover a wall in such a way that they create a Delft blue tone without paint or fabric.

“There is no rule to how contained a collection needs to be presented. A collection is, first and foremost, a personal story, thus it’s your choice as to how you want to experience the items. A collection of small items will certainly have more impact shown together in one room. However, some collections are so big in scale and/or number, they need to be displayed throughout a home.

“The days of having period rooms, where everything of one era is shown together, has passed. When one combines different periods and styles in one room, the juxtaposition of these different periods can set off each other in quite an impactful way.

“Some people are quite private with their collections, wanting them to be solely for their own enjoyment. While other collections might be too bizarre or risqué for many people’s comfort levels. If the collection is meant to convey a certain image, the study-office is an excellent spot. However, if the collection is meant to be enjoyed by all, then the living room or another main gathering area is best.”

— **Guy Regal, a New York-based dealer of fine art and antiques**