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RIGHT FRAME OF MIND

From left: When displaying 3-D objects, Joffe suggests using stands, such as these clear versions that create a floating effect; an example of a professionally framed textile, which is Joffe's preferred method of displaying these delicate objects.



SHOWING OFF

Unique collections require innovative approaches to display and conservation.

By Rebecca Taras

There are world travelers, and there are collectors. The dedicated few who are passionate about both pursuits tend to have the most interesting homes, filled with treasures whose provenance now includes not only their own history, but the story of the find.

But bringing home garments, sacred objects and antique treasures presents a wide variety of challenges. How can one honor the rich tradition behind the objects, while also enjoying them on a day-to-day basis?

Those who have begun collections during their travels, or those who are thinking about it, would do well to visit first-rate showrooms, and observe

how best to display the great variety of souvenirs that may be acquired in the course of global travel.

Glen Joffe of Primitive (130 N. Jefferson St., 312.575.9600, beprimitive.com)—a lifestyle gallery filled with furniture, artifacts and jewelry from around the world—knows the pitfalls and pleasures of handling souvenirs of every stripe. His mantra? Knowledge, common sense and aesthetics lead the way, along with a healthy dose of respect for the cultures which produced the objects.

Here, he provides a set of surefire starter tips for shipping and tastefully displaying your finds.

Happy travels, dear reader.

Transport 101

No matter what type of treasure you acquire on your travels, Joffe says it's best to leave the dirty work to the pros so that you feel confident knowing that your item will arrive to its destination safely and legally. "Every country and

city has different policies," says Joffe. "Find a freight forwarder with a good reputation who can handle all of the paperwork, packing and shipping."

Practice Mindfulness

When it comes to displaying a Buddha—or other 3-D objects of a sacred nature—Joffe stresses the importance of showcasing the item in a respectful manner. "If it's not already presented on a platform, then you have to create or obtain one, as a Buddha cannot be on the ground," says Joffe. Other options include placement on a wall shelf, alcove or shelving system, depending on the size.

Picture Perfection

When displaying artwork, Joffe says, collectors need to find the correct frame for the painting itself, even though they are more likely to be focused on the space where they plan to place the piece. The same rule can be applied to any 3-D object too.

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Be Jeweled

The method for displaying jewelry depends upon your intention. A collectable like a 16th to 18th century set of Buddhist prayer beads, for example, can be stored in a jewelry box for convenience until it's time for you to wear it. "You're the display," says Joffe. But if you choose to treat the item as an artifact, he suggests you use an armature so that the item appears to be floating. "The base should stabilize, present in the best light and really recede into the object," he explains. Other options include a jewelry rest—like a modest velvet bust—or a shadow box, a specialty at Primitive.

Material World

One of the best ways to display a decorative and important textile, like a Tibetan thangka, is by having it professionally framed. "It needs to be stitched or pinned down," advises Joffe. "There's definitely an art to the presentation, so it requires the help of a pro."

Magic Carpet Ride

From Asian to Turkish to rare Mongolian finds, rugs—technically called spreads—have tremendous versatility in the home. Aside from the obvious use as a floor covering, these beauties can also serve as a wall tapestry, bedspread or throw. "It's all about feeling," explains Joffe. "The rug can be appreciated to the greatest extent, but functional at the same time."



PLACEMENT PERFECT

Clockwise from top: It's important to display objects of importance with respect; textiles are framed to display and protect the pieces; both framed and 3-D works of art can work together in a space.



Functional Furnishings

According to Joffe, even people who collect furniture—like vernacular Chinese pieces—as an investment aren't about to let the pieces collect dust in storage. "Oftentimes it's used even though it's a valuable antique," Joffe explains. "It's not just pretty to look at, but also functional—it's furniture art." ■