

Houston BOMA

SKY LINES

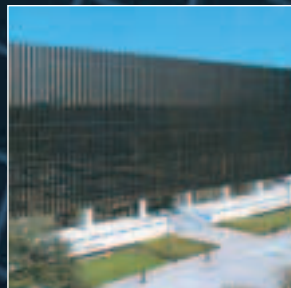
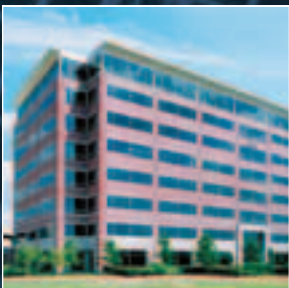
THE 2004 TOBY AWARDS

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THIS YEAR'S BIG WINNERS



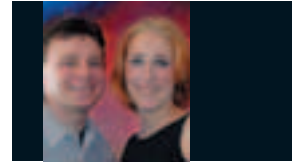
WATERPROOFING YOUR BUILDING ENVELOPE

THE BENEFITS OF CORPORATE ART



PUBLICATION OF
THE HOUSTON
BUILDING OWNERS
AND MANAGERS
ASSOCIATION





By Austin James
and Blakely Bering

Art: Simple, Basic, Smart

Don't be afraid of the stereotype:
A consultant can help you find inclusive
works that can improve your quality of life

Today as I was thinking about the day ahead, I heard Cat Stevens croon, "Morning has broken out of the starry sky." I listened to what those words truly mean. The beauty of the morning breaking is like staring into a beautiful painting.



When you wake and look at the sky, it is a reminder of the beauty surrounding us. I challenge you to look up tomorrow morning and take Cat Stevens' words to heart.

OK, OK. You're probably thinking to yourself: "This must be some snooty artist who has the time to stare into the morning sky while sipping coffee and thinking about painting the day away." However, I hope to convey a different understanding of artists, art, and art consulting to you, and how art can actually improve your quality of life.

Art is not exclusive. It is actually inclusive. Artists want to know what you see within their work. And art consultants are not pretentious snobs who think they know more than you do. They want to help you find works you love and assist you in defining your space.

What do you prefer — gallery wrapped canvas, unfinished canvas, framed acrylic on paper, or pastels? Just as the world is dynamic, so are organizations and their environments.

Many people feel as though they might be judged if their interpretation of a piece of art is not the same as the creator. The humor behind that is most artists want you to have your own connection with a piece of art. If you're going to hang a piece of art on your wall, the artist wants you to like it.

Art is definitely something different for each viewer. Basically, art is an object or experience that can be perceived through taste, smell, touch, sound, sight and the ever-allusive sense of "emotion". The experience of art is created by the artist through imagination and shaped by skill — just like the experience of your company's product and service is created through imagination shaped by skill.



So how can an art consultant help? Quite simply, he or she can assist you in the selection of art to match the taste, smell, touch, sound, sight and “feeling” of your business. A consultant can help you provide your clients and employees with an environment consistent with the “feel” of your organization’s product and service.

Does your company do its own taxes? The chance is no; you hire a CPA to prepare your financial statements. Your business environment can only add to the bottom line. Your environment is a direct reflection of your organization’s success and the attention your company places on daily activities.

Style, class, and prestige do not have to break the bank. Creating a space that makes one want to come to work is important for company pride. If you are so embarrassed about the place you work that you would rather take your clients to a Starbucks, you probably have a problem.

And if you don’t want to welcome your clients into your space, you don’t want to be there either. So, for your company’s yearly coffee bill, you can create an environment worthy of your clients and employees.

Have you seen the posters for Leadership, Pride, and Courage? Those same feelings can be accomplished by having the right artwork on your walls. In fact, your employees will most likely feel more pride if a business owner takes the time to choose pieces of art that represent the company.

Art that flows with your environment increases the value of your space by forming a complete picture, a cohesive statement. Just as you wouldn’t put 24-inch off- road tires onto a mini Cooper, you don’t want your environment to jar or perhaps offend your clients.

Imagine how you would feel walking into a building with white walls and cold marble floors. Would you feel less than at ease? Or, how do you think you would feel if you went shopping for a car and had only one color and one model to choose from? Wouldn’t life get a bit boring? The same outlook can be applied to your office and the building you work in.

The consultant looks at the type of building or office you are in, your type of business, and your employees. These considerations help determine the type of work and the configuration that best suits your company’s environment, whether it be one large piece of art in your lobby, or 12 small pieces.

What about the building owner or manager who does not want to spend an entire build-out budget on a painting, or who simply has other priorities? Creating an office environment that is stimulating to employees and clients alike does not have to cost three points of your profit margin. It can be easier to accomplish than you might expect.

There are many ways to acquire artwork for your environment. One option is to lease. Leasing art comes with some financial advantages. You don’t own the work, so you don’t have to pay for a number of pieces up front. You also have the option to rotate leased work if that suits your environment.





The leasing of art is similar to leasing your office space: You don't have to commit to occupying the space for more than a specific amount of time. The primary reason an organization will lease art rather than own art is because there is likely to be a change in one's office environment. Perhaps your company is setting up a temporary office. There is no point in owning art that will not be needed in the short-run or keeping art that may not match the next environment.

You may also lease to own art. Often you can arrange for a monthly payment with a buy-out option at any given point during the lease term. In many cases, leased art can be a write-off. Consult your CPA and see if leasing art makes budgetary sense for your organization.

You might simply prefer an outright purchase of fine art. Whichever option your company chooses installation tends to be a separate line item. Negotiate installation up front and get an inclusive consulting arrangement for one price.

Houston has many wonderful galleries with lots of investment art. Often a consultant can help you accomplish a polished environment for about the same amount of money you would spend on time, money and effort handling the task yourself. An Art Consultant in Houston should guarantee to meet a client's budget to earn the business.

The next time you visit a company, notice the environment. Think to yourself, "What does the environment tell me about this organization?" The next time you visit a gallery, consider buying a piece of original artwork. It's fun! Take time to consider how embracing a work of art or a beautiful morning can actually improve your quality of life. 📱



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Austin James is owner of Corporate Walls and has been marketing his artwork and the art of others since 2001. Previous occupational experience includes Assistant Director of Admissions for the Art Institute of Houston, Marketing Specialist for the American Red Cross in Houston, & Media Planner for Bloom Advertising Agency in Dallas. Austin believes running his own art consulting business is a dream come true because: "I get to combine the industrial marketing oriented business side of my personality with my passion for art." Austin's work is on display in his Gallery with the art of 25 other artists.

Austin holds degrees in both business (BA, Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas) (MBA, University of Dallas, Irving, Texas) and Fine Art (MFA, Master of Fine Arts, Naropa University, Boulder, Colo.). Austin moved to Houston with his family in 1973.

Blakely Bering, a nationally exhibited artist, is a fifth generation Houstonian. She holds a BFA from Carnegie Mellon in Costume and Set Design. Blakely has been involved with theater and opera companies across the country. Her artwork has been shown in Los Angeles, Sante Fe, Houston and San Antonio. Blakely combined the experience of her years growing up in her family's hardware store, Bering's, and her creativity, to partner with the Austin James Gallery and Corporate Walls as an artist and art consultant.